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Hart

Memoir of the Life and Services
of Colonel John Nixon

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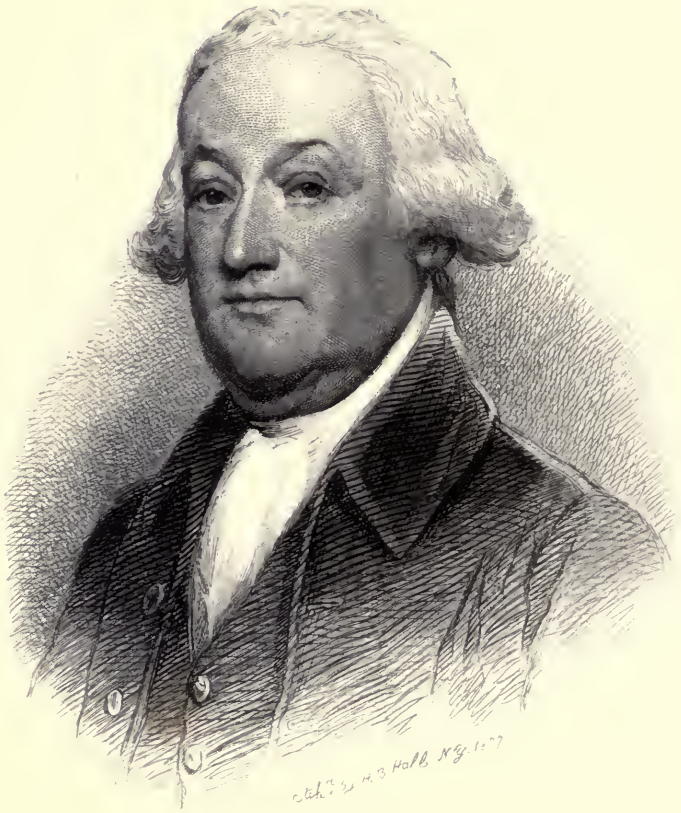

FROM THE ORIGINAL PICTURE BY GILBERT STUART.

MEMOIR

OF THE

LIFE AND SERVICES

OF

COLONEL JOHN NIXON

PREPARED AT THE REQUEST OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE RESTORATION OF INDEPENDENCE HALL FOR "THE NATIONAL CENTENNIAL COMMEMORATION" OF JULY 2, 1776
AND PRESENTED AT THE MEETING IN INDEPENDENCE CHAMBER, SATURDAY JULY 1, 1876

BY

CHARLES HENRY HART

[Reprinted from "The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography"]

PHILADELPHIA
1877

COLLINS, PRINTER.

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TO

Miss ELIZABETH NIXON

SOLE SURVIVING DESCENDANT OF

COLONEL JOHN NIXON

BEARING HIS NAME

THIS MEMOIR OF HER GRANDFATHER

Is Inscribed

WITH AFFECTION AND RESPECT

BY

THE AUTHOR

INDEPENDENCE HALL.

PHILADELPHIA, October 25, 1875.

To CHARLES HENRY HART, ESQ.

SIR: The Committee on the Restoration of Independence Hall have resolved to invite the presence of American Historians, Biographers, and Literati at that place on the second day of July, 1876. They desire that a Biographical sketch of every individual, whose memory is associated with this Building during the early days of the Republic, may be prepared and deposited on that day among the Archives of the National Museum.

You are respectfully requested to be present at Independence Hall on the day above mentioned, and to bring with you a sketch of the life of

JOHN NIXON;

or in case of a preference for another subject, to communicate the fact. It is desired that these sketches should not exceed two pages of foolscap.

With great respect,

FRANK M. ETTING,

Chairman of Committee.

COLONEL JOHN NIXON.

BY CHARLES HENRY HART.

(Centennial Collection.)

When I accepted the invitation, I had the honor of receiving in October, 1875, from the Committee on the Restoration of Independence Hall, to prepare a memoir of the life of John Nixon to be presented at the meeting of American *literati*, requested to assemble in Independence Chamber on July 2, 1876, the centennial anniversary of the adoption of the "Resolutions respecting Independency," I was doubtful if I should be able to fulfil my engagement, so little was known of his public services. That he was a merchant highly esteemed; the second president of the Bank of North America, and had read and proclaimed publicly to the people for the first time the Declaration of Independence, were the only prominent facts known even to his descendants. It seemed as if the limited "two pages of fool's cap" could not be supplied. But careful and laborious investigation among published and unpublished archives, revealed incident after incident throwing light upon his important career, until at last when the rough material was sifted and shaped into its present form, the improbable two pages had been duplicated a dozen times. It is presented in its extended size, so that those who come after us may be made fully acquainted with the life and services of one of the country's early and pure patriots.

John Nixon, who read and proclaimed publicly to the people for the first time the Declaration of Independence, was born in the city of Philadelphia, in the year 1733. The exact date of his birth is uncertain, but on April 17, 1734–35 (O. S.), when two years old, he was baptized at Christ Church by the rector. His father, Richard Nixon, is believed to have been a native of Wexford, County Wexford, Ireland, but if so, when he came to this country is unknown. That he was a born

Irishman has been sought to be established from the fact that his son, the subject of this memoir, was, as will be seen later, a member of "The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick," a social society formed in 1771, whose prerequisite to membership was being descended from an Irish *parent* in the first degree, or to have been a native of Ireland, or a descendant of a former member; but, as a mother is a *parent* as well as a father, she might have been the one of Celtic birth and not he. This view is strengthened by the fact that there is an heirloom in the family, in the shape of an old and very large sea chest with these initials on the top in brass nails, a not uncommon method with the early emigrants to this country for denoting and memorizing the period of their departure from their homes, and the arrangement of the letters would show that the initial of the surname was "N," while "G" and "S" represented respectively the Christian names of the emigrant husband and wife.

N.
G. S.
1686.

The earliest mention we have of Richard Nixon is the record of his marriage to Sarah Bowles at Christ Church, by the Rev. Archibald Cummings, on January 7, 1727–28 (O. S.). He was a prominent merchant and shipper, and in 1738 purchased the property on Front Street, below Pine, extending into the Delaware River, afterwards known for nearly a century as Nixon's Wharf. In 1742, he was chosen a member of the Common Council of Philadelphia, which position he continued to hold until his death. Pending the French and Spanish War, which was ended by the Peace of Aix La Chapelle, concluded on the 7th of October, 1748, Franklin urged upon the citizens to associate together for the purposes of defence, and two regiments of "Associators" were accordingly formed, one for the city and the other for the county, which were divided into companies, one for each ward and township, and of the Dock Ward Company, in the City Regiment, Richard Nixon was chosen captain. The Dock Ward at this time was, and continued up to the present century, the most important and influential ward in the city. He was a prominent member of Christ Protestant Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, and one of the vestrymen during the years 1745, 1746, and 1747. He

had four children, all of whom were baptized there, and three of them who died in infancy were buried in its ground, where he himself found a resting place also on the 6th of December, 1749 (O. S.). His personal property after his decease was appraised at £20,000, a no inconsiderable sum in those days. His wife survived him many years, dying July 25, 1785, at the advanced age of eighty years, and was buried at Christ Church, where reposed the remains of her husband.

John Nixon, the only child who survived his father, and the subject of this notice, early took a leading interest in public affairs. In March, 1756, at the age of twenty-three, during the excitement of the French War, he was chosen by a majority of votes of the freemen of Dock Ward, Lieutenant of the Dock Ward Company, "in the stead of Mr. Thomas Willing, the late lieutenant of said company, who was pleased to resign his commission." This company was a sort of home guard, and doubtless the same as the one formed in 1747, of which his father was the first captain. He succeeded to the business of his father, at the old place on Front Street, with Nixon's wharf in the rear, adjoining the warehouses of Willing & Morris, the most considerable merchants in the province or indeed in the colonies. His first transaction of which we have any knowledge is one which, with the light of modern ideas, is not calculated to be looked upon with favor. We find him in March, 1761, with Willing, Morris, & Co., and other prominent merchants of the city, signing and presenting to the Assembly of Pennsylvania, a remonstrance to a petition that had been presented the previous month by citizens of Philadelphia against the importation of slaves, and in consequence of which a bill had been prepared laying a duty of £10 per head on each negro brought from abroad. The importers, in their remonstrance to the bill, represented that the province was suffering great inconvenience for want of servants, and "an advantage may be gained by the introduction of slaves, which will likewise be a means of reducing the exorbitant price of labor and in all probabilities bring our commodities to their usual prices." They represent that they have "embarked in the trade" of importing negroes through

the motives they have mentioned, and that they will labor under great hardships by the law taking immediate effect without giving them time to countermand their orders. This protest, however, had no effect upon the Quaker House, for the law to lay a duty on negroes was passed within two weeks.

The next important mercantile transaction, however, with which we find him connected, was one of a far different character, as it joined him with the destinies of his native land in its conflict with the mother country. After much agitation in the Colonies over their proposed taxation by Great Britain, the fatal Stamp Act was finally passed in March, 1765, with the provision that it should not go into effect until the first of the following November. Meetings were held in every town and village in the land, protesting against this outrage upon the rights and liberties of the Colonists as British freemen, and petitions were promptly prepared and forwarded by trusty agents to the home government urging its repeal. But it was left for the merchants of the land to make the hated act nugatory in its purpose, and the first step towards this end was taken by the merchants of Philadelphia, who, in public meeting, pledged to each other their honors not to receive, sell, or import any goods or merchandise from Great Britain until the iniquitous Stamp Act should be repealed. This "NON-IMPORTATION AGREEMENT," bearing date October 25, 1765,[1] was subscribed by three hundred and seventy-five importers and shop-keepers, and prominent among the signatures appears the large bold one of JOHN NIXON.

The story of the repeal of the Stamp Act, and the subsequent imposition of a tax on tea, etc.; followed by the destruction of the tea in Boston harbor, and the Boston Port Bill,

[1] Since the preceding was written, investigations have shown this date to be an error. The agreement itself *bears* no date, except that placed on it in lead pencil by Mr. Thomas Bradford at the age of ninety, and seventy years after the event took place. Lately discovered contemporary evidence points clearly to November 7, 1765, as the day on which the meeting of merchants was held, and these non-importation resolutions agreed to.— *Vide* Mag. Amer. Hist., N. Y., June, 1877.

are too familiar to permit of repetition here, but they kept the Colonies in a state of constant ferment, and in no place was this more the case than in Philadelphia, where in all the measures of these trying times John Nixon took an active part. The inhabitants of Boston, being anxious to know how far they would be sustained by other portions of the Colonies in their effort to withstand the tyranny of the British Crown, sent Paul Revere to Philadelphia with a circular letter, dated May 13, 1774, requesting the advice of the citizens of Philadelphia upon the bill closing the Port of Boston. Immediately upon its receipt on May 20th, a town meeting was called, and held at the City Tavern, and resolutions were passed appointing a committee of correspondence, with directions to answer the letter from Boston, and assure the people of that town "that we truly feel for their unhappy situation, and that we consider them as suffering in the general cause." Of this committee Mr. Nixon was a member, and on the following day met a portion of the committee, who prepared, signed, and sent "The letter from the Committee of the City of Philadelphia to the Committee of the City of Boston," which contained the key-note of the Revolution in these words: "It is not the value of the tax, but *the indefeasible right of giving and granting our own money* (A RIGHT FROM WHICH WE CAN NEVER RECEDE), that is the question."

On the 18th of June a meeting of citizens was held in the State House Yard, at which Thomas Willing and John Dickinson presided, when it was resolved that the Act closing the Port of Boston was unconstitutional, and that it was expedient to convene a Continental Congress. A committee of correspondence was appointed, directed to ascertain the sense of the people of the province with regard to the appointment of deputies to a general Congress, and to institute a subscription for the relief of the sufferers in Boston. Mr. Nixon was made the third member of this committee, the first and chairman being John Dickinson. The authority of the committee being doubtful, they recommended that at the next general election a new permanent committee should be regularly chosen, which was accordingly done, and he was again duly returned. He

was a deputy to the General Conference of the Province, which met at Carpenters' Hall, July 15, 1774, and remained in session until the 22d, with Thomas Willing in the chair and Charles Thomson for its clerk. The important action of this body was the adoption of resolutions condemning in strong terms the recent acts of Parliament, and recommending the calling of a congress of delegates from the different colonies. Mr. Nixon was also a delegate to the Convention for the Province of Pennsylvania, held at Philadelphia from the 23d to the 28th of January, 1775, which, among other things, unanimously endorsed and approved the conduct and proceedings of the late Continental Congress—the famous first Congress of September 5, 1774.

The open strife between the mother country and her colonies had now fairly begun, and on the 19th of April, 1775, the first conflict of the Revolution took place at Lexington and Concord. It was not until the night of April 24th that the intelligence of these fights reached Philadelphia, and the sensation caused by the news was intense. A meeting was held in the State House Yard, at which it was computed that eight thousand people were present. One brief resolution was passed, in effect that the persons present would "associate together to defend with ARMS" their property, liberty, and lives against all attempts to deprive them of their enjoyment. The committee of correspondence elected the previous autumn became in this emergency an authority not contemplated at its formation. The members entered at once upon the task, and desired that all persons having arms should give notice, so that they might be disposed of to those wishing them. The "Associators" immediately began to enroll themselves into companies, and drills were held daily, and sometimes twice in the day. The companies were formed into three battalions; and the "Third Battalion of Associators," consisting of about five hundred men, and known as the "Silk Stockings," was officered by John Cadwalader, Colonel; JOHN NIXON, Lieutenant-Colonel; Thomas Mifflin and Samuel Meredith, Majors. The first known appearance of these "Associators" in public was early in May, when the officers met the southern dele-

gates to the Continental Congress about two miles from town, and escorted them into the city. A few days later a similar compliment was paid to the delegates from the Eastern States. Samuel Curwen, the loyalist, who was in Philadelphia at the time, has preserved an account of this reception in his diary. He writes: "The cavalcade appeared first, two or three hundred gentlemen on horseback, preceded by the newly chosen city military officers, two and two, with drawn swords, followed by John Hancock and Samuel Adams in a phaeton and pair." The Congress duly met on Tuesday, May 10th, and on the 15th of June, upon the motion of Thomas Johnson, Jr., of Maryland, George Washington was chosen unanimously Commander-in-Chief of the Army raised and to be raised, and his first appearance in public in his military capacity was made five days later, when upon the commons near Centre Square he reviewed the City Associators, numbering about two thousand men. On the following day he set out for Cambridge, escorted for some distance by the City Troops.

A "Committee of Safety for the Province of Pennsylvania" having been appointed by the Assembly in June, 1775, John Nixon was made a member on its reorganization, October 20, 1775, and continued an active and prominent member of the body until its dissolution, July 22, 1776, on the formation of the Council of Safety with David Rittenhouse at its head, and out of the two hundred and fifty-eight meetings which were held between October 20, 1775, and July 22, 1776, he is recorded as being present at one hundred and ninety-seven. Of this Committee of Safety, Franklin was President and Robert Morris Vice-President, but, owing to their being absent so often from the meetings by reason of other public duties, application was made to the Assembly for authority to choose a chairman *pro tem.* at any time when there was a *quorum*, and the president and vice-president absent, which was granted, and under this authority Mr. Nixon was chosen the first chairman, November 20, and at all subsequent meetings, when he was present and the president and vice-president absent, he was selected to fill the chair. He was Chairman

of the Committee on Accounts, and all orders for the payment of money for public purposes were drawn upon him. In May, 1776, upon information being received that the enemy's vessels were coming up the Delaware, he was requested by the committee to go down to Fort Island and take charge of the defences there, and in July, he was placed in command of the guard ordered to be kept in the city, which was composed of four companies, one from each battalion. It was in the month of July also that he performed that act which entitles him peculiarly to a commemorative notice in this centennial year.

The resolution for Independence, which had been offered in Congress on the 7th of June by Richard Henry Lee, was finally adopted on the 2d of July, one hundred years ago, and on the following 4th the reasons for that Independence as set forth in Jefferson's immortal Declaration were agreed to. On the 5th, which was Friday, Congress passed the following resolution:—

"*Resolved*, That copies of the Declaration be sent to the several Assemblies, Conventions and Councils of Safety, and to the several commanding officers of the Continental Troops, that it be proclaimed in each of the United States, and at the Head of the Army."

A copy of this resolution was sent the next day by the President of Congress to the Committee of Safety, whereupon it was

"*Ordered*, That the Sheriff of Philad'a read or cause to be *read and proclaimed* at the State House, in the City of Philadelphia, on Monday the Eighth day of July instant at 12 O'clock at noon of the same day the Declaration of the Representatives of the United Colonies of America, and that he cause all his officers and the Constables of the said city to attend the reading thereof.

"*Resolved*, That every member of this Committee in or near the city be ordered to meet at 12 O'clock on Monday to proceed to the State House where the Declaration of Independence is to be proclaimed."

The chronicler, Christopher Marshall, records a "warm sun-

shine morning" for Monday, July the Eighth. The Committee of Inspection met at eleven o'clock in the Hall of the Philosophical Society on Second Street, and went in a body to the Lodge, where they joined the Committee of Safety. The two committees then went in procession to the State House, where, standing on the platform of the observatory which had been erected by the American Philosophical Society to observe the transit of Venus, June 3, 1769, JOHN NIXON READ AND PROCLAIMED, to a great concourse of people, in a voice clear and distinct enough to be heard in the garden of Mr. Norris's house on the east side of Fifth Street, THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE PUBLICLY FOR THE FIRST TIME. It is recorded that it was received with heart-felt satisfaction, and that the company declared their approval by their repeated huzzas. Thomas Dewees was at this time Sheriff of Philadelphia, and as he had the alternative of reading it himself or causing it to be read, Mr. Nixon was selected, doubtless from his prominence as a citizen and as a member of the Committee of Safety. There is now deposited in Independence Hall a broadside copy of the Declaration, printed at the time, which was found among some papers of John Nixon, and is possibly the very one from which he read and proclaimed it on the eighth of July, 1776.

Towards the close of July, the Philadelphia Associators were called into active service. New Jersey was threatened, and the several battalions marched to Amboy in its defence. Their service lasted about six weeks, when they returned to the city, and remained until December, when they were called for again, this time to serve immediately under the commander-in-chief. At Washington's suggestion all the Associators of the City and Liberties were formed into one brigade under the command of Colonel Cadwalader, whereupon Lieutenant-Colonel Nixon succeeded to the command of the third battalion, and on the 10th, the city troops, twelve hundred strong, were in full march for Trenton. Washington, in writing to the President of Congress from Trenton Falls, under date of December 13, 1776, says: "Cadwalader with the Philadelphia militia occupies the ground above and below

the mouth of Neshaminy River as far down as Dunks' Ferry, at which place Colonel Nixon is posted with the Third Battalion of Philadelphia." Here Washington directed redoubts to be thrown up, and, if the enemy attempted to cross, a stand was ordered to be made against them, and on the 22d, he issued an order to Cadwalader specifying "Colonel Nixon's regiment to continue where it is at Dunks' Ferry." This ferry was the important post to guard on the Delaware, as it was fordable, and it was the point assigned for the crossing of one body of the troops on Christmas night to attack Donop and the Hessians near Mount Holly, while Washington crossed higher up the river. How, owing to the floating ice at this point, only a few officers got across, and how Washington took the enemy by surprise and gained a signal victory over them without the aid of these troops, are well known to all, for with this event is connected one of the much controverted points in our history—the disaffection of Joseph Reed.

It becomes necessary to advert to this subject in this place for the reason that in the controversy which ensued between Reed and Cadwalader, and which called forth the celebrated pamphlets bearing their names, Colonel Nixon was an actor. On page 24 of General Cadwalader's "Reply to General Joseph Reed's Remarks," appears this certificate:—

"I do hereby certify that in December, 1776, while the militia lay at Bristol, General Reed, to the best of my recollection and belief, upon my enquiring the news, and what he tho't of our affairs in general, said that appearances were very gloomy and unfavorable;—that he was fearful *or* apprehensive the business was nearly settled, *or* the game almost up, or words to that effect. That these sentiments appeared to me very extraordinary and dangerous, as I conceived, they would, *at that time*, have a very bad tendency, if publicly known to be the sentiments of General Reed, who then held an appointment in the army of the first consequence.

JOHN NIXON.

Philadelphia, March 12, 1783."

That Joseph Reed at this time contemplated transferring his allegiance from the Continental Congress to the British King the light of historical research leaves no room for doubt. On the 1st of January, 1777, the time limited to accept the privileges of Howe's proclamation would expire, and if the Battle of Trenton had proved a defeat to Washington instead of a brilliant victory, Joseph Reed would have accepted its provisions and committed openly the treason he meditated in his heart. It was Washington's success and not Reed's unswerving patriotism that saved him. These conclusions at least are reached after a careful and diligent examination of the subject from all available standpoints.

The Philadelphia Associators remained with Washington until late in January, and took a gallant part in the Battle of Princeton on the second. In a letter written by Reed to Thomas Bradford from head-quarters at Morristown, dated January 24, 1777, he says: "General Cadwalader has conducted his command with great honour to himself and the Province, all the field officers supported their characters, their example was followed by the inferior officers and men, so that they have returned with the thanks and praises of every general officer in the army. * * * It might appear invidious to mention names where all have behaved so well,—but Colonel Morgan, Colonel Nixon, Colonel Cox, your old gentleman [William Bradford], and Majors Knox and Cowperthwaite, certainly ought not to pass unnoticed for their behaviour at Princeton." This campaign is the only active service in which we know the Philadelphia Associators to have been engaged, except wintering at Valley Forge in 1778.

All means of supplying the army having failed, a new plan was established in the spring of 1780 by the formation of an institution called "the Bank of Pennsylvania for the purpose of supplying the army of the United States with provisions for two months." The plan was that each subscriber should give his bond to the directors of the bank for such sum as he thought proper, binding himself to the payment thereof in specie in case such payment should become necessary to fulfil the engagements and discharge the notes or contracts of the

bank. The securities thus given by ninety-three persons amounted to £315,000, Pennsylvania money, Robert Morris and Blair McClanachan being the largest contributors at £10,000 each, while John Nixon and many others subscribed each £5000. The bank was opened July 17, 1780, in Front Street, two doors above Walnut, and was governed by two directors and five inspectors; the first director being John Nixon and the second George Clymer. The entire amount secured was called for, and the last instalment was paid in November. In May of the following year Robert Morris, then Superintendent of Finance, submitted to Congress "A Plan for establishing a National Bank for the United States of North America," and on the 31st of December, "The President, Directors, and Corporation of the Bank of North America" were incorporated. This was the first incorporated bank in the United States; and it is of interest in this connection and may not be generally known, that for this reason, when the National Banking Act of February 25, 1863, went into operation, which provided that all organized banks accepting its provisions should adopt the word "National" in their title, the Bank of North America was permitted specially to accept the provisions of the Act without changing its original title, so that, although a national bank, its title is simply "The Bank of North America." Thomas Willing was the first president of this bank; and upon his appointment to the presidency of the Bank of the United States on its formation, Mr. Nixon, who had served as a director from January, 1784, was elected in January, 1792, to succeed him, and continued in the office until his death, on the 31st of December, 1808, at the age of seventy-six years.

Mr. Nixon held many positions of public and *quasi* public importance. In January, 1766, upon the Assembly of the Province passing a bill for the "Regulation of Pilots plying on the River Delaware," he was selected with Abel James, Robert Morris, and three others to officiate as Wardens of the Port of Philadelphia; and the next year was appointed one of the signers of the Pennsylvania Paper Money, emitted by authority of the Act of May 20, 1767. In November,

1776, Francis Hopkinson, John Nixon, and John Wharton were constituted by Congress the Continental Navy Board; and in December, 1778, the Supreme Executive Council of the State confirmed John Nixon, John Maxwell Nesbitt, and Benjamin Fuller as a Committee to settle and adjust the accounts of the late Committee and Council of Safety; while in August of the following year he was appointed by Congress one of the Auditors of Public Accounts, whose chief business was to settle and adjust the depreciation of the Continental Currency.

He was treasurer of the "Society for the Encouragement of American Manufactures and the Useful Arts," established in 1787, and one of the founders of the "Philadelphia Society for the Promotion of Agriculture," formed in February, 1785. In 1789, upon the reorganization of the College, now the University of Pennsylvania, he was elected one of the Board of Trustees; and in the same year, under the Act of March 11, 1789, incorporating "The Mayor, Aldermen, and Citizens of Philadelphia," he was elected one of the fifteen aldermen, to serve for seven years. It must be remembered that the position of alderman at that period was very different from the office of the same name at the present day. Then it was one of honor and not of reproach, and the duties, similar to those of the present select council, with certain judicial functions attached. In the grand Federal procession on the 4th of July, 1788, celebrating the adoption of the Constitution of the United States, Mr. Nixon represented INDEPENDENCE "on horseback, bearing the staff and cap of Liberty; under the cap a white silk flag, with these words, 'Fourth of July, 1776,' in large gold letters."

Mr. Nixon was a man fond of social enjoyment, and as early as 1760 was a member of the celebrated Fish House,—"The Colony in Schuylkill," and in 1763, we find him one of the Mount Regale Fishing Company, which met at Robinson's Tavern, Falls of Schuylkill, every other Thursday from June to October, and was composed wholly of men of wealth and fashion—the leaders of Society in that day—as may be seen from the names of Shippen, Chew, Hamilton, Francis,

McCall, Lawrence, Swift, Tilghman, Allen, Hopkinson, Willing, Morris, and Nixon. He was also an original member of "The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick" composed of persons having Irish blood, and was present at the famous dinner given to Washington on New Year's day, 1782. To the Pennsylvania Hospital he was an early and repeated contributor, and served as one of the managers from 1768 to 1772.

After the reorganization of the land office in 1792, Mr. Nixon purchased largely of lands in the outlying counties of the State which, like most of such adventures, proved unsuccessful. At the time of his death, he was the senior member of the firm of Nixon, Walker, & Co., shipping merchants, composed of himself, his only son Henry Nixon, and Mr. David Walker. His residence was on Pine Street below Third Street, adjoining that of the Rev. Robert Blackwell, Rector of St. Peter's Church, while Fairfield on the Ridge Road, immediately north of Peel Hall the site of the present Girard College, was his country seat. Mr. Nixon was married, October, 1765, in New York, to Elizabeth, eldest child of George and Jane [Currie] Davis, and had five children, four daughters and one son; Mary, wife of Francis West; Elizabeth, wife of Erick Bollman; Sarah, wife of William Cramond; Jane, wife of Thomas Mayne Willing; and Henry, who married Maria, youngest daughter of the Honorable Robert Morris. Mrs. Nixon died August 31, 1795, at the age of fifty-eight, and was buried in St. Peter's Church-yard, at the corner of Third and Pine Streets, Philadelphia, where she reposes in the same grave with her husband.

In appearance, Mr. Nixon was a fine, portly man, with a noticeably handsome, open countenance, as may be seen from his portrait by Gilbert Stuart, painted late in life, in possession of his grandson, Mr. Henry Cramond.[1] His manners were dignified and rather reserved, while he was noted for kindness of heart, high sense of honor, sterling integrity, and firmness

[1] A miniature painted by Peale in 1772 is in possession of his granddaughter Miss West.

of decision. In the early days of the revolutionary struggle, Mr. Nixon shared the conservative views of his fellow townsmen and copatriots Robert Morris, Thomas Willing, and John Dickinson, but after the edict of separation had been announced, none were more eager or earnest in the cause. He was a strenuous opponent of the old constitution of the State, and a firm adherent of the party formed to effect its change. The closing item of his will shows the sentiments of the man better than any other words can portray them. "Having now my children disposed of my estate in a manner that I hope will be agreeable to you all, I request and earnestly recommend to you to live together in terms of the purest love and most perfect friendship, being fully pursuaded that your happiness and that of your respective families will, in a great measure, depend on this. These are my last words to you, and I trust that you will have them in particular and long remembrance."

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